



The Freebird

VOLUME II

JULY-AUGUST 2006

The Freebird is the newsletter of the Irish Fair of Minnesota—August 11th-13th, 2006. Its purpose is to keep us connected, provide updates, celebrate successes and share our stories, and to support the mission of the Irish Fair by promoting and cultivating

Irish culture.

CORK CRAÍC WITH THE FUCHSIA BAND

Formed only 2 years ago, this young, exuberant Trad band became well-known on the Irish/American music scene with their performance at the Kansas City Irish Fest 2005. As an animated reviewer in KC wrote, the band is: “Fierce traditional, and pulsating with it. The Fuchsia Band are too good...relentlessly they make friends everywhere they go, from West Cork to Finland.”

The new album by *The Fuchsia Band* is now ready and will be released on August 11 in conjunction with their appearance at the Irish Fair in Minnesota. Be sure to get a signed copy.

Fuchsia have started writing their own tunes. Their very first creation was recorded last month. It’s called *Grá dá raibh!*, which means “Love That Was!”

Máirtín De Cógain is a singing-dancing-storytelling- bodhrán player. Storytelling has been in his family for generations, and Máirtín has his full share of the gift of the gab. Eoin, who proudly hails from West Cork, started playing the box at the age of five has notched up numerous prizes over the years for playing music, and is an eager speaker of the Irish language. Mike Heffernan plays flute and also saxophone, and guitar. Brian McGillicuddy (banjo, mandolin) is the newest member of the band. Like the rest of the group, Brian has been playing music from a very early age.

Join the Fuchsia band at the Irish Fair on Minnesota as they fulfill their mission to bring Irish traditional music, story, song and dance --and Cork craic—across the globe.



SCYTHIANS SEETHE WITH FANTASTIC FIDDLIN’

With performances described as an “interactive, reel-based frolic” the members of this fiddle-focused band (Leks, Joe, Danylo and Mike) play a variety of instruments and are natural showmen, engaging the audience on every number. These Scythians are classically trained musicians from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, demonstrating the cross- boundaries connection that music can create.

“Scythian began as a fluke six years ago when I was visiting a friend in college and he pulled out a tape of

Celtic music,” recalls band leader Leks Fedoryka. “We stayed up until early morning listening to those great fiddles over and over again. I was haunted by the energy and became obsessed with learning to play that way.”

Be one of the first in town to see these rising stars on the Irish music scene!! Scythian will be performing at an Irish Fair preview show at O’Gara’s on August 9th at 9pm.

TUSSIE'S TEA AND SWEETS---AND OTHER TASTY STUFF IN THE CULTURAL AREA OF THE IRISH FAIR

Kathi Jones

We invite fairgoers to join us in the pavilion at Tussie's Tea and Sweets where lots of linen and lace and elegant little deserts provide an oasis until patrons are ready to jump back into the lively bustle of Irish Fair.



We are offering Mary Clancy's own recipe for Irish scones. With the scones comes Chivers strawberry jam from Ireland. Back this year are lemon tarts and, for the kids, shamrock cookies. New is a chocolate mousse tart. All the deserts are very fresh, because they are baked just before dawn each day of Irish Fair. Beverages of hot and iced teas are made from Barry's Tea, imported from Ireland.

While our tea room patrons chat and relax, traditional musicians provide soothing Irish music as backdrop. Besides the Giggin' Siles (at left, performing in Tussie Tea Room in the 2005 Fair) will be Celtic harpist Dennis Doyle, a long time speaker and musician at Irish Fair. Also, Beth Engelking, a classically trained

flutist, who plays O'Carrolan tunes and occasionally shakes things up with a few jigs and reels, played on her wooden Irish flute.

Just the other side of the tea room's white picket fence is a *wealth of cultural offerings*. New this year is a replica of one of the St. Brigid Holy Wells found throughout Ireland. Each day of the fair, John Burns will give brief talks about Irish Holy Wells, held sacred from the earliest ages.

Nearby is the poteen (moonshine) still replica. Poteen has been a part of the Irish culture for 200 years. Doug Jones will give daily talks about the moonshine and why that cottage industry became illegal only for those who wouldn't give the government a cut of their profits. Schedules for talks will be posted at the sites. Traditional Irish crafts, such as spinning, basket making, sculpting, and quilting are demonstrated throughout the Cultural Area. The crafters love chatting with fairgoers about their arts.

The popular annual photo contest entries will be displayed.

Another exhibit will showcase the life and works Irish playwright, Samuel Becket. On loan from Milwaukee Irish Fest is an exhibit about the Irish cinema.

Back in the pavilion for her third year is Mary Clancy, widow of Paddy Clancy of the famous Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem singing group, who are credited as the first to bring a resurgence of Irish music to the world. Mary talks with fairgoers about their remembrances of the Clancys. She also encourages young people to apply for the Paddy Clancy Music Scholarship for study at the University of Limerick in Ireland. Fairgoers are welcome to discuss

THE GIGGIN' SILES—A TEA ROOM TREAT

Love of traditional Irish music and the Irish language have brought together 7 fine singers in the 'Giggin' Siles'. Several of these Twin Cities women met while studying the Irish language with Frank Joyce, who often used his lovely Irish tenor to teach the tongue. The Siles-- Nancy Carrick, Kia Cashman, Judith Clancy, Maureen Engelhardt, Connie Hessevick, Mary Lane & Kathie Luby—have day jobs that vary from vet tech to social worker, but when they get together to sing, it's a gathering of angels. Well, *sometimes*, that is. Their acapella repertoire ranges from the rarified to the raunchy, depending on the setting; in Tussie's Tea room the more genteel side shows, whereas at pub gigs anything goes.

The name Giggin' Siles is itself fun-loving and layered like the group, playing on the Irish- Australian word for girls ('Sile' is pronounced 'Sheila'), and rooted in Ireland's ancient past when stone female images, called 'Sheila na Gig,' were placed on churches and other important buildings. It is not clear whether these images were a warning against lust or a fertility symbol, but you get the idea.

The Siles have attracted the notice of the Minnesota Scottish as well as the Irish community, having been recently invited to at Hill House where a very appreciative audience listened to their beautiful harmonies sung in Irish, English--- and a couple new Scottish tunes learned for the occasion.

The Siles have recently recorded their first CD, available at Irish on Grand. They will be singing at the Fair will sing both Saturday and Sunday afternoons in Tussies Tea Room. They will also be offering a workshop on traditional singing in the IMDA tent at 11:30 Saturday.

contributing to the scholarship. Mary is a delight, and no visit to the pavilion is complete without stopping by her booth.

*Brocaire Buí, a native Irish breed--
or for you English-only speakers,
a Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier*



DOGS GO IRISH

Life is a funny place so you shouldn't be too surprised to learn that the first area of the Fair to go bilingual English/Irish is...*the Native Dogs of Ireland!* Or, as you'll see on our sign for the area '*Madraí na hÉireann*'. "No, we won't be teaching 'woof-woof' in Irish" says Dog Area organizer Siobhán Dugan "—although we *could*--it's' 'bhuf! bhuf!'. What we *will* have is signage of all the breeds in Irish, plus handouts with Irish endearments that people can call their dog—or each other -- and good Irish names for dogs, beyond the garden variety 'Bailey' and 'Murphy'. We will also use the dog theme to introduce the names of colors in Irish, since 5 colors are among the names of the breeds themselves."

The handouts will also be a link to Gaeltacht Minnesota, a community group focused on learning Irish, in the Cultural Area of the Fair. "We have a great time, and a lot of visitors at the Irish language booth in the Cultural Area" says Gaeltacht Minnesota volunteer Will Kenny "But the Irish language isn't just about quaint old curses, blessings and wise sayings; it's very much a living, daily language in Ireland, and ordinary, daily usage of Irish like this in the Dog area helps underscore that. It'd be great to highlight the Irish language like this in more areas of the Fair in future."

Other Great Stuff in Dog Area

In addition to the 10am-4pm "petting zoo" aspect of the Native Dogs area, where fairgoers can get to know and touch the breeds, there will also be a parade and stage show at 1:30 each day to the **Irish Indeed! Children's Area Stage**. Each breed is introduced with an explanation of the history given—in English, yes--of what they did

in traditional Ireland. As well, we are very lucky to have this year animal behaviourist and Irish Terrier owner Cassia Drake speak on the human-dog bond and dog safety. "We want parents especially to learn how to introduce their children safely to dogs and to always ask owner's permission to pet a dog, not just assume any dog will be delighted to get hugs from a stranger, however well meant" says Dugan. "That said, there sure is a *whole lot of kid-dog cuddling* that goes on in our area!"

Also for the first time we will have a **hunting test demonstration by Rosemary Sexton and her very talented Realta Irish Water Spaniels** 4:00pm Saturday at the West End of the Island

EVENTS

Irish Fair Summer School –Register NOW!

Irish Fair Summer School (August 10, 2006) brings a richer appreciation for Irish culture and heritage through lectures, workshops, documentaries and discussions. For more information about the Summer School see the Fair web page http://www.irishfair.com/summer_school/index.php

Irish Songfest & Silent Auction to Benefit Madigan Lang featuring Cahal Dunne

Join us for a lively night of singing with "Ireland's Happy Man" - renowned crooner Cahal Dunne - and a silent auction to help raise support for 9 year old Madigan Lang. O'Gara's Irish Restaurant and Pub – St. Paul, MN August 6th, 2006 from 5:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. \$20.00 donation will be accepted at the door.

Run With The Celts 5K and Family Run 5K and Family 1K Run Saturday, August 12. The Family 1K will start at 9:30 a.m. and the 5K will start at 10:00 a.m. [Register online](#) now. Online registration closes at noon on Wednesday, August 9. The Run with the Celts is a fundraiser for The Legacy Fund of the Irish Fair of MN, which gives back to the Irish community and other new immigrant populations.

Until Next Time, Best Regards from the

irish fair of
minnesota